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THE NEW EUROPE

BY SYDNEY BROOKS

I SUPPOSE there is nobody outside of Germany who does not see that this war can have but one ending. When the first great rush of the German armies upon France was met and foiled by a greater retreat, followed up by an offensive that hurled the invaders back almost upon their own frontiers, the issue of the struggle was virtually determined. It was vital to Germany's chances of success that she should crush the Allied forces in France during the opening weeks of the campaign. She came within measurable distance of doing so. The world has never seen, and may never see again, a spectacle of such overwhelming military efficiency as the Germans furnished after their momentary check at Liège. It justified everything that the warmest admirers of the German army as a machine and an organization have ever said in its praise; and it completely confounded those who thought that the very vastness of the structure might make it unwieldy. So far as the outside world could judge, scarcely a cog slipped. The perfection of its equipment, the massive simplicity of its strategy, the skill with which overpowering numbers were always concentrated at the decisive point, and the mobility, endurance, and disciplined valor of the troops during the month of August more than reproduced the staggering impression made upon our fathers by the German handling of the war of 1870. They hacked their way through northeastern France up almost to the gates of Paris. The splendor of the performance dazzled, I think, most people's eyes to the fact that it accomplished little. So long as the Franco-British armies, while always pushed back, had not been dissipated, much less destroyed, were still intact and still fighting, the German attack had failed in its main objective. For the task set the invaders was, and still is, not merely to sweep the Allies before them, but to place them *hors de combat*, to wipe them out on the field

of battle or to lock them up behind the ramparts of fortresses—in any case to render them incapable of further effective action. The task set the Allies, on the other hand, was and still is to fight for time, to contest every yard of ground, to retire, if need be, to the Atlantic, but at any cost to remain in being. To keep Germany fully occupied in France, while Russia accumulates her forces for the invasion of the Fatherland, that is the supreme goal of Anglo-French strategy.

It has been most adequately achieved. Not only did the Allies cease their retirement, but in the first week of September they assumed the offensive, they drove the Germans first beyond the Marne and, secondly, beyond the Aisne, and for nearly a month, as I write, have held them there as in a vise. Thus after nine weeks of incessant fighting the smashing blow which was to annihilate the Anglo-French armies and leave Germany free to settle accounts with Russia has not been delivered, and, to all appearances, never will be delivered. Meanwhile the Russians, whose energy and dash and leadership have been perhaps the biggest surprise of the war, continue their remorseless and locust-like advance from the East, while the Serbs and Montenegrins with the utmost gallantry and success are harrying Austria-Hungary from the south. The Germans, I imagine, never counted much on their Austrian ally. But they can hardly have expected such a complete and humiliating exhibition of military inefficiency as the Dual Monarchy has displayed to the world from the opening gun of the war. The ill fortune of Austria on the battlefield has long been proverbial; this time it has pursued her into the very grave of the realm of the Hapsburgs. Moreover, though sorely stricken, Belgium still maintains her heroic fight with an army that has abated nothing of its martial spirit. And this Belgian resistance has made necessary the detention of at least two army corps that the German General Staff would have been glad to use in other directions. Over two months, therefore, from the commencement of hostilities, even the military situation, which the Germans expected and were expected to mold pretty much as they pleased, is anything but auspicious to German arms. Nothing can hide the fact that their initial enterprise, after coming within an ace of triumph, has completely miscarried and that they have suffered a severe strategical defeat.

It is difficult to see how matters can improve for them as time goes on. Other nations, now neutral, may join in the war, but their accession will prove on the balance to be decidedly disadvantageous to the Teutonic Powers. But even if the struggle is restricted to the present combatants, the Germans in another six months will find themselves, even when they have called up their last reserves and drilled their last volunteers, outnumbered by at least two to one. In equipment and organization, apart from their commissariat arrangements, they are probably superior to any of the Allies; in the qualities of generalship and high command it is too early as yet to say that they have any advantage; in *morale* and determination the German nation is undoubtedly the equal of the Russians, the British, or the French, but the German troops in the field seem already to be showing signs of a weakening fiber; and their prodigious losses, especially in officers, and the consciousness that they are engaged in a losing fight against Time, are beginning—or so, at least, there seems reason to believe—to work with disheartening effect. In other and not less vital particulars the scales are heavily tipped against them. Germany's import and export trade has virtually ceased; her merchant marine has been swept off the seas; the British navy is exerting to the full all the economic and strategical advantages of the control of the seas; and whatever may have been the preparations made in advance for this struggle, they are almost bound, before another year is out, to crumble away beneath the converging pressure of industrial paralysis, dwindling food-supplies, and a growing burden of unemployment and distress. Compared, again, with her antagonists, compared especially with Great Britain, Germany's financial resources are shaky and slender; and if Mr. Lloyd George's prophecy that "the last few hundred millions will win this war" proves to be correct—and there is all history to back it—then there cannot be much doubt they will be found in the British and not the German purse. These are terrible handicaps; and though the Germans, especially when they are driven to fight on the defensive in their own land, will put up a long and desperate resistance that it will need every ounce of power that the Allies can command to break down, still the ultimate issue is beyond question.

It is not, therefore, premature to let one's mind play over

the shape and circumstances of the new Europe that is to arise out of this prodigious upheaval. The old Europe is admittedly dead. After an uneasy life of little more than forty years it has passed in thunder and lightning to an irrevocable eclipse. A fresh framework will have to be constructed, and unless it, too, is to be torn to pieces a generation or so later, the architects will have to be animated by a very different spirit from that which has guided the diplomatic jerry-building of the past. We in Great Britain, happily, are quite clear as to that. We mean, if we can, to chain down Prussian militarism for ever, but not in order that the path may be smoothed for the coming of some other pistol-bully. We believe that from this war will arise an opportunity never vouchsafed to Europe before to sweep away all or nearly all the old, cumbersome, and embittering barriers that have kept the nations apart in wasting and venomous ill-will. We want a map of Europe that even for the defeated in the present war will leave no soreness behind; a settlement that for all peoples and races will be in the nature of a liberation; a readjustment that will have no ragged edges of dismembered and revengeful nationalities. Other wars have ended in terms of peace drawn up to suit the calculations of diplomatists, dynastic ambitions, and the petty plans of strategists. We intend that this war shall end in terms of peace drawn up to square with one principle—the principle of nationality—and to meet one supreme consideration, the needs and wishes and desires of the several peoples concerned. We were forced into the war to preserve Belgium from extinction. That object, therefore, will not only find expression and attainment in the ultimate settlement, but will furnish the keynote of British policy in safeguarding the future of all the other states, large as well as small. For the familiar type of peace treaty negotiated by an aloof and not infrequently a sinister diplomacy we shall aim at substituting a peace treaty that will vindicate and be welcomed by the democracies of Europe. The fatal and vitiating flaw in the old dispensation was that it dotted Europe with patches of unrest, fragments of people divided from their kinsmen and thrust into a hated and alien association, regions held and governed by one Power that racially and historically belonged to another Power. The dismemberment of nationalities was the root cause of the militarism that has produced the present war. Their

restoration to unity will prove, we believe, the one sure road to a lasting peace.

Mr. Winston Churchill has summarized very clearly British hopes and intentions in this matter. "Let us be careful," he said, "not to make the same mistake or the same sort of mistake as Germany made when she had France prostrate at her feet in 1870. Let us, whatever we do, fight for and work toward great and sound principles for the European system. The first of those principles which we should keep before us is the principle of nationality—that is to say, not the conquest or subjugation of any great community, or of any strong race of men, but the setting free of those races which have been subjugated and conquered. And if doubt arises about disputed areas of country, we should try to settle their ultimate destination, in the reconstruction of Europe which must follow from this war, with a fair regard to the wishes and feelings of the people who live in them. That is the aim which, if it is achieved, will justify the exertions of the war, and will make some amend to the world for the loss and agony of suffering which it has wrought and entailed."

In somewhat similar terms Mr. Asquith, speaking at Dublin on September 25th, defined the end which Great Britain ought to keep in view. "Forty-four years ago," he said, "at the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said: 'The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics.' Nearly fifty years have passed. Little progress, it seems, has as yet been made toward that good and beneficent change, but it seems to be now at this moment as good a definition as we can have of our European policy—the idea of public right. What does it mean when translated into concrete terms? It means, first and foremost, the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relations of states and of the future molding of the European world. It means, next, that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own. Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Greece, and the Balkan States—they must be recognized as having exactly as good a title as their powerful neighbors, more powerful in strength

and in wealth, to a place in the sun. And it means, finally, or it ought to mean, perhaps by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the clash of competing ambitions, for groupings and alliances and a precarious equipoise, of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal right and established and enforced by a common will. A year ago that would have sounded like a Utopian idea. It is probably one that may not, or will not, be realized either to-day or to-morrow. If and when this war is decided in favor of the Allies, it will at once come within the range and before long within the grasp of European statesmanship."

With these fixed points to go by—the principle of nationality tempered in disputed cases by the principle of local option—it is possible to project the general outline of the new Europe. In doing so one has, of course, to make certain assumptions over and beyond the grand assumption that Germany will be beaten. One has, for instance, to take it for granted that Russia and France will fall in with the British view of the form reconstruction should take. The three Powers, it will be remembered, engaged on September 5th not to conclude peace separately and not to demand any terms of peace without previous agreement; and to this undertaking both Japan and Servia have since subscribed. That does not, however, necessarily imply that unanimity among them as to the guiding principles or the main provisions of a settlement will be easily reached. But I think there is good ground for feeling sanguine that no serious differences will arise, and that on practically all points the British view will prevail. If I may content myself with that bald assertion without stopping to give the many sound reasons that might be urged to justify it, it is obvious that the first care of the Allied negotiators must be to provide the amplest possible reparation for Belgium. To that the whole power and credit of the British Empire and the passionate determination of its people stand gladly and admiringly pledged. If you were to ask an average Englishman to-day what it is that Great Britain may hope to reap from the war, he will answer either, "Nothing," or, "I really don't know." Then it will occur to him that perhaps Heligoland or some of the German possessions in Africa and the Pacific may be desirable additions to the Empire. But it will be clear to you that he has not pon-

dered the question and is not greatly interested in it. Mention the claim of Belgium, however, and you will find him hotly insistent that it is a British duty to see that Germany discharges it to the hilt. For herself Great Britain is not likely to demand very much, and certainly nothing in Europe or in European waters, unless it be the retrocession of Heligoland. In the main, she will be satisfied if the menace of Prussian militarism is effectually removed. But for Belgium she will certainly demand large and tangible reparation for the violence and treachery that the country has suffered at the hands of the enemy. It will be presumably both financial and territorial. A swinging indemnity and the annexation of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, which signally failed to defend its own neutrality, are the very least that Belgium could be offered as compensation for the injuries she has received.

It is inconceivable that there should be any difference of opinion whatever either among the Allies or among neutral nations as to the justice of forcing Germany to make whatever amends are possible for the base brutality of her treatment of Belgium. One may take it equally for granted that the outside world will likewise unanimously approve the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine to France. A more difficult question, however, is suggested by Schleswig-Holstein, the province wrenched from the Danes in the war of 1864, and still predominantly Danish and anti-Prussian in sentiment. A strict application of the principle of nationality would require its retrocession to Denmark in spite of the fact that throughout the present war the Danes have remained neutral. But the problem is complicated by the building of the Kiel Canal within the Schleswig-Holstein area. There will undoubtedly be a desire in many quarters that the terms of peace should include the internationalization of the great waterway connecting the North Sea and the Baltic. The canal, it is possible, may become the boundary line between Denmark and Germany and be placed by the Allied Powers under Danish administration for the commercial use of all nations. That is, at any rate, a suggestion which is pretty sure to come up for discussion, though one cannot as yet say that opinion has hardened upon its merits or otherwise. If Denmark and Belgium and France, however, each receive a portion of what is now German territory, it is tolerably safe to assume that Holland, following

the example of Rumania after the Balkan War, will put in a claim for "compensation." The position of Holland throughout the war has been an excessively trying one. For reasons which amply satisfied the prudential character of the Dutch, the Government at The Hague decided to preserve a strict neutrality while its independence, and indeed its very existence as a free and self-governing state, were being fought out on the plains of Belgium and amid the vineyards of France. Nobody, least of all in Great Britain, has made any complaint of the Dutch attitude; it has been perfectly intelligible and eminently cautious; but no one, so far as I can observe, is at all inclined to regard it as meriting any special recognition and reward at the hands of the Allies. The Dutch have no particular cause of complaint, historical or otherwise, against Germany; and any claim of theirs to German territory as compensation for their indirect sufferings during the war would meet, one imagines, with a remarkably cool reception in the Allies' camp. Certainly the hope entertained by Great Britain is that Germany, while rendered impotent for harm, will not feel humiliated by the terms imposed upon her; and no proposal of a purely predatory nature is likely to meet with British support.

If now we turn to the east of Europe it is to be confronted with one dominant fact—the collapse, to all appearances the irremediable collapse, of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the August number of *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* I gave some reasons for thinking that the Dual Monarchy was never likely to fall to pieces through the violence of its centrifugal elements, and that its dissolution, if it were ever to be dissolved, would be brought about by external pressure and not by an internal explosion. But I had no idea, when I wrote, that the external pressure would so soon be brought to bear upon its trembling fabric. Beyond question we are witnessing the death-throes of the realm of the Hapsburgs. Humanly speaking, there is no possibility that it can survive the appalling catastrophes that its own military inefficiency, its insoluble racial distractions which have always made it rather a Government than a nation, and the vigor of its Slav enemies have brought upon it. The "ramshackle Empire," as Mr. Lloyd George called it the other day, has reached its last days. The event which Europe for half a century has dreaded as a cause of war

has now come about as the result of war. And in Great Britain, at any rate, much as we like the Austrians as individuals and as a people, there are few lamentations over the imminent blotting out of a Power that for centuries was the strongest in Europe. On the contrary, the impression deepens that it is better for the peace of southeastern Europe that Austria-Hungary should go and that its territories should be divided among the nationalities that have the best right to them.

The partition of the Dual Monarchy, in any case probably an unescapable consequence of the war, was converted into a virtual certainty by the decree, issued in the name of the Czar and promising the recreation of the Kingdom of Poland. That promise, I venture to predict, will be redeemed in full; and its redemption means the amalgamation of the Polish provinces of Austria, Germany, and Russia under the scepter of the Czar. Apart from that it is conceivable that Russia may make no further territorial demands on Germany either for herself or for any of the Slav peoples. The rest of Austria-Hungary up to a certain extent follows what might almost be called natural lines of division. The Rumanians will gravitate toward Rumania; Bosnia, Croatia, Slavonia, Herzegovina, and other predominantly Slav districts of southern Hungary will form themselves into one or two Slav kingdoms buttressed on Servia and Montenegro; while Italy will take in the Trentino and Trieste and possibly Pola and Fiume. The great increase in the Servian power and dominions that will thus ensue will, it is hoped, make it easy for the statesmen of Belgrade to hand back to Bulgaria some of the Macedonian districts, in which Bulgars outnumber the other races, that were torn from her after the war between the Balkan Allies. The problem of Albania will probably prove as baffling as it is now. It will certainly do so if Italy asserts her claim to control the destinies of that distracted province. But if Italy can be induced to regard herself as sufficiently compensated by her accession to the Italian-speaking districts of Austria-Hungary and to the ports of Pola, Fiume, and Trieste, and will relinquish interests in Albania that must automatically lose much of their importance with the extinction of Austria-Hungary, then the Albanian question is not insoluble along the lines of Swiss federalism. These speculations, of course, depend to some extent on what

part, if any, Turkey decides to play in the war. Her intervention in behalf of the Teutonic Powers, by completing the ruin of her European empire and adding thereto the loss of her Asiatic dominions, would raise the complex and pregnant issue of Constantinople—an issue, I may add, that nobody wishes to face until he is absolutely compelled to.

Even after the Dual Monarchy had thus been carved and handed round there would remain two peoples still undisposed of—the Magyars of Hungary and the German-speaking Austrians. The former, a virile, fascinating people, with a thousand years of self-contained history behind them, might well be invited to form a homogeneous state of their own. The Germans, on the other hand, would be urged to throw in their lot with their kinsmen of the German Empire. In that way, it will at once be seen, Germany, though beaten, would emerge from the conflict with more subjects and larger territories than she possesses to-day, and one of the dreams of Pan-Germanism would be realized when all who speak the German tongue in Europe would be gathered under a single head. A certain hesitation on the part of the Germans to admit some ten million Catholics to the Empire, a certain reluctance on the part of the easy-going Austrians to live in permanently close quarters with the Prussians, would naturally fail to operate against the ideal of a comprehensive German union. The Allies, I imagine, will be found quite prepared to carry their doctrines of nationality and local consent so far as to leave Germany in a position as good as her most ardent patriots have ever prophesied for her. In Great Britain, at any rate, there is no enmity, and no desire whatever to act harshly, toward the German people. We have even persuaded ourselves that in this struggle we are freeing Germany as much as Europe; and the terms of peace that Great Britain will put forward and support will be framed with the twofold object of preventing the resurrection of Prussian militarism, and of creating the conditions most favorable to the commercial and literary and artistic genius of the German people, to German culture, and to the sober pride and tranquillity of an Empire that will be deprived of its last excuse for either seeking or desiring revenge.

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